



SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIA & EAST AFRICA: EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS

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SHELTER

Introduction

From the very onset of the tsunami response, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has maintained the importance of recovery, that simply building houses was not an option unless it is accompanied by waste water infrastructure, access to health care and education, and employment opportunities to thrive.

The initial years of being plagued by land titles in Aceh, logistical hurdles in Maldives, and land allocation in Sri Lanka, have been overcome. Some of the challenges which hinder the handover of completed houses are the slow pace of infrastructure development, such as roads, access to water and sanitation, and electricity.

The International Federation's [transitional shelter project in Aceh](#) has drawn to a close while permanent housing construction continues to move ahead in Maldives and Sri Lanka. More than 80 percent of the 51,000 houses being built by the Movement are now either completed or under construction and thousands of families are now settled in the new homes.

Indonesia: Rebuilding houses and providing homes

As one of the main players in the tsunami operation, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) continues its shelter programme in Aceh province and Nias Island, Indonesia, benefiting the affected communities with transitional and permanent shelters.

The disaster posed a great challenge for the Movement in fulfilling the community's needs for homes after the emergency phase. The Movement initiated a transitional shelter programme for those eligible while permanent homes were being constructed. More than 80,000 people are supported continuously through 19,923 transitional shelters.

The Movement continues its construction of robust permanent housing in compliance with local hazard standards and, in pursuit of the Movement's objective to contribute to well-prepared, resilient and safer communities better able to cope with future disasters and emergencies.



A child from Aceh Utara shows the keys to her new home provided by the Hong Kong branch of the Red Cross Society of China. HKRC/Robert Li

The first strategy of the Movement before undertaking humanitarian work is identifying and targeting the most

vulnerable communities. Movement partners set the beneficiary selection criteria together with local authorities and the communities, with frequent discussion on policy issues and problem solving. Working together towards an equitable outcome reduces potential tension and conflict among the targeted communities.

To ensure ownership and transfer of knowledge, Movement projects involve the communities who play a part in deciding and supervising the project's process to ensure it proceeds as planned. This encourages the communities to take responsibility in rebuilding their homes and in future, rebuilding them better by applying the newly-obtained knowledge in safer and better building techniques.

Communication and advocacy are the main issues in building trust in the communities. The Movement disseminates information on the building process to the communities formally and informally. Various media such as tabloids, newsletters, bulletin boards and the radio are also used to ensure information about the construction reaches all levels of the affected communities. Since the communities are always involved in the construction planning process, they are able to voice their opinions and share their experiences.

Sri Lanka: One more step towards recovery

The devastation from the tsunami caused many people to lose their homes, with an estimated 98,000 houses damaged or destroyed. This led to shelter being the most vital and visible component of the tsunami recovery programme in Sri Lanka.

The provision of temporary shelters to those affected was the main aim of the International Federation's tsunami recovery programme. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society and its international partners focused on erecting temporary shelters for those whose homes were destroyed, as well as for those afraid to stay in their homes located in disaster-prone areas, in anticipation of another tsunami. Close collaboration with local authorities proved beneficial at every level of the operation with many housing sites established in the 14 affected districts. The International Federation's temporary shelters housed more than 3,000 families. Security, water and sanitation, food, medical and psychological needs, and other socio-economic requirements were also provided alongside the shelter project.



Considerable progress has been made on Dhuvaafaru; the remaining construction works will be completed before the end of this year.

The International Federation is now focused on the provision of permanent houses. The beneficiary selection and verification for housing grants were very critical at the initial stage and was done in consultation with local government authorities. Grama Niladharies and divisional secretaries were actively engaged in this context. In some instances, this was a time consuming process due to beneficiaries being spread out in different parts of country and a lack of past experience in a project of such magnitude. In this perspective, what is significant is that the beneficiary selection criteria needed to be clear to the community – to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries – for a transparent and defect free operation.



Houses on Kudahuvadho were completed in 2007

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement committed to the construction of 30,811 houses by 2010. In its effort to provide shelter, these projects are being carried out at 54 sites in 11 districts. Some 18,533 houses have been completed and handed over to the beneficiaries whilst 10,545 units are still under construction. Another 1,733 houses are still in its planning phase. Utility facilities such as access roads, electricity, water and sanitation were also provided.

Maldives: Rebuilding lives

The International Federation’s reconstruction efforts in the Maldives have seen significant progress three years after the devastating tsunami ripped through the peaceful archipelago causing deaths, widespread destruction and leaving thousands of people homeless. Construction work on three islands has been completed and beneficiary families have moved in, while works on the remaining island of Dhuvaaafaru are nearing completion.

Based on a request from the government of Maldives and in line with its national recovery and reconstruction plan, the International Federation committed to build structurally stronger houses on four islands under the “build back better” concept. Detailed housing specifications for all islands were provided by the Maldives’ housing infrastructure re-development unit (HIRU).

Operational Highlights

In Indonesia:

- By the end of March 2008, the collective effort of the Movement has provided 14,145 houses to beneficiaries while 2,579 are under construction. Partner national societies involved in the construction of houses are the national societies of America, Australia, Britain, Canada, China and its Hong Kong branch, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey, aside to the host national society, Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia/PMI).
- The International Federation and PMI have since completed its transitional shelter programme in Aceh province and Nias Island at the end of 2007. A total of 35 implementing partners were involved in the implementation of this programme. The programme benefited more than 80,000 people and continues to be a source of support to communities via the transitional shelters, home extensions or as income generation across 12 districts.
- In February this year, PMI and the Canadian Red Cross held a handover ceremony of houses to earthquake survivors in Nias Island. The ceremony marked the completion of more than 600 out of the 2,100 houses to be built for eligible beneficiaries. Prior to the start of the earthquake-resistant houses programme, PMI and Canadian Red Cross conducted an environmental assessment, developing village plans and assisting community members to obtain land titles. In the construction process, both PMI and Canadian Red Cross strove to ensure a

high quality of the houses and water and sanitation systems to not only meet the communities' needs, but to also minimize the environmental impact.

- On International Women's Day, the International Federation's health team in Nias Island held activities for women village volunteers who have dedicated their time in delivering health and care messages in their villages. Aside to celebrating the day, volunteers participated in a training to create souvenirs from beads, aimed at equipping them with income generation skills. The community-based first aid programme has reached over 40,000 people in 39 villages in Nias Island. After a year of implementation, an annual review meeting with represented village volunteers was held. In the meeting, the stakeholders analyzed how the programme had been applied in the villages.
- PMI and British Red Cross held a 'Face to Face' photo exhibition in Banda Aceh for the month of March. The photo exhibition is a communicative way to share information of what has been achieved. In the unique photography project, the affected communities in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia were featured to show how they got their lives back together. The beneficiaries featured in the photo exhibition have received new houses or cash grant programmes from British Red Cross.
- With the handover of 1,928 houses to targeted communities in Teunom, Aceh Jaya in December 2007, PMI and British Red Cross have completed the construction of 2,212 homes for the communities. The communities have since moved into their new homes and received the certificates of ownership. The beneficiaries also received assistance in livelihood, benefited from disaster risk reduction programmes, and empowered to cope with future hazards with safer houses, economics and well prepared environment.
- In terms of interagency cooperation, PMI and American Red Cross worked closely with the International Office for Migration (IOM) in building 1,679 houses, nine community centers and 12 schools in Aceh Province.
- Construction activities for the erection of new PMI branch buildings in all 21 Aceh districts and two on Nias are proceeding with a standard building blueprint agreed for all 23 structures. The construction of six branches; namely Banda Aceh, Pidie, Sabang, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Timur and Bener Meriah have completed.
- The International Federation conducted gender awareness training for Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement staff in Aceh province and Nias Island. Up to 150 people participated in the two-day training conducted in March 2008 and continuing into April.

In Sri Lanka:

- Altogether, 248 houses have been fully reconstructed and completed in January 2008 in Nasiventivu, Batticaloa district, East Sri Lanka with wells and latrines facilities.
- Reconstruction of 264 houses in Kanakinagar, Kilinochchi district, North Sri Lanka was completed with water and sanitation facilities in January 2008.
- In the venture of construction, renovation and retrofitting of school buildings, the International Federation implemented and completed projects in ten schools in four districts, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Trincomalee, with financial commitment totaling over USD 1.2 million.
- Many construction projects have been completed and handed over in 2007 while several projects are due to be completed in 2008. As many as 7,000 families have benefited from these projects in 2007. A project funded by Finnish Red Cross, 240 housing units in Periyaneelavani, Ampara district, East Sri Lanka, is now underway and likely to be completed and handed over in May 2008.
- The "Road Map for a Safer Sri Lanka" developed in December 2005 promotes a systematic application of disaster risk management focusing on risk reduction and preparedness for response. The SLRCS has been identified as an important actor in the Road Map, which identifies key roles for the Red Cross Red Crescent in community-based disaster risk management. These roles are in promoting volunteerism, establishing resource centers, disseminating early warnings and public awareness, conducting information, preparedness and mitigation projects as well as in preparedness for response planning.
- The risk reduction approach, which SLRCS has initiated, includes improved preparedness of the national society and communities at risk, combined with support for local mitigation measures. The International Federation and the SLRCS are currently carrying out a community-based disaster

management programme in ten districts. Through public education and information work, the programme will enable vulnerable communities to understand the underlying causes of why hazards become disasters and the resources they can use reduce risk. This will in turn give vulnerable communities a high degree of self reliance.

- To identify vulnerabilities and risks inside the communities, hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments were conducted in several places. Based on the assessments, suitable disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities to reduce the adverse effects of floods, landslides, and epidemics hazards were identified. Emergency response teams will be formed in the villages to provide appropriate training on first-aid, search and rescue and logistics. Hazard early warning messages will be disseminated in the villages and safer evacuation routes will be identified. In the meantime, mitigation activities such as canal cleaning and construction of small bridges will be initiated.
- Within the context of sustainable development, these activities can be part of a community action plan, which communities networking with relevant stakeholders in Sri Lanka can implement and continue.

In Maldives:

- The Federation has constructed 14 houses on Maafushi and 46 on Guraidhoo, completed in May and November 2006 respectively, plus a 32-bed capacity accommodation block in the home for people with special needs on Guraidhoo. All households have been provided with rainwater harvesting kits and are connected to new sewer systems constructed by the International Federation.
- To settle the Gemendhoo community, the International Federation constructed a total of 109 houses on Kudahuvadho Island in two phases. In the first phase, 50 houses were constructed; they were completed in July 2006 and handed over to beneficiary families in December 2006. In the second phase, 59 houses were constructed; these were completed in July 2007 and handed over to beneficiaries during August 2007.
- Focus is now on Dhuvaafaru Island, which is considered to be a safer island because of its geographical characteristics, such as natural ground level, size and reef features, which are important in providing protection from tidal surges.
- Under the Dhuvaafaru programme, the International Federation has funded the construction of 562 houses as well as other community infrastructure such as a community administrative building, a pre-school, a primary school, a secondary school, an auditorium, water supply and sewer systems, a sports complex, roads, and a power supply system – supplemented by solar energy.
- Also part of the project is a health centre funded by the German Red Cross, an additional 38 houses funded by the government, and mosques funded by the Islamic Supreme Council, with support of the housing and infrastructure redevelopment unit. A harbour will also be constructed by the government with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- At the current implementation rate, the international Federation-supported project is expected to be complete by end of September 2008, with beneficiaries likely to move in during October. Pending completion of the project, the community of Kandholhudhoo is living in temporary shelters on five other islands of Raa Atoll: Alifushi, Hulhudhuffaru, Maduvvari, Meedhoo and Ungoofaaru.



Apart from being functional spaces for communities, the storey buildings can serve as safe havens for people in times of disasters.

For more details and news stories, photos and all operational updates related to the tsunami, visit:

<http://www.ifrc.org/tsunami>